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ABSTRACT

The psychological and social aspects of achievement in physical activities are examined. The first chapter discusses health and the sources and development of self esteem. In the second chapter, ways in which a positive attitude toward one's body image may be developed are explored. The third chapter is concerned with achievement, motivation, fear of failure or success, and competitiveness. In chapter four, meeting affiliation needs through physical activity is discussed along with the seeking of recognition and approval and the controlling of aggression. The aesthetics of motion are considered in the fifth chapter. Chapter six offers advice on avoiding negative addiction to exercise, self control, and rejecting arbitrary limitations. (JD)

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"BASIC STUFF" SERIES

A collection of booklets presenting the body of knowledge
in physical education and sport for practitioners and students.

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preface

The information explosion has hit physical education. Researchers are discovering new links between exercise and human physiology. Others are investigating neurological aspects of motor control. Using computer simulation and other sophisticated techniques, biomechanics researchers are finding new ways to analyze human movement. As a result of renewed interest in social, cultural, and psychological aspects of movement, a vast, highly specialized body of knowledge has emerged.

Many physical education teachers want to use and apply information particularly relevant to their teaching. It is not an easy task. The quantity of research alone would require a dawn to dusk reading schedule. The specialized nature of the research tends to make it difficult for a layperson to comprehend fully. And finally, little work has been directed toward applying the research to the more practical concerns of teachers in the field. Thus the burgeoning body of information available to researchers and academicians has had little impact on physical education programs in the field.

The Basic Stuff series is the culmination of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education efforts to confront this problem. An attempt was made to identify basic knowledge relevant to physical education programs and to present that knowledge in a useful, readable format. The series is not concerned with physical education curriculum design, but the "basic stuff" concepts are common core information pervading any physical education course of study.

The selection of knowledge for inclusion in the series was based upon its relevance to students in physical education programs. Several common student motives or purposes for participation were identified: health (feeling good), appearance (looking good), achievement (doing better), social (getting along), aesthetic (turning on), and coping with the environment (surviving). Concepts were then selected which provided information useful to students in accomplishing these purposes.

The Basic Stuff project includes two types of booklets. Series I is designed for use by preservice and inservice

teachers and consists of six pamphlets concerning disciplinary areas: exercise physiology, kinesiology, motor development and motor learning, social/psychological aspects of movement, and movement in the humanities (art, history, philosophy). This first series summarizes information on student purposes. Series II is also designed for use by teachers but with a different focus. Three handbooks are included: early childhood; childhood; adolescence. Each describes examples of instructional activities which could be used to teach appropriate physical education concepts to each age group.

The development of the Basic Stuff series has been a cooperative effort of teams of scholars and public school teachers. Scholars provided the expertise in the content areas and in the development of instructional materials. Public school teachers identified relevance to students, field tested instructional activities, and encouraged the scholars to write for general understanding.

The format of the booklets was designed to be fun and readable. Series I is structured as a question and answer dialogue between students and a teacher. Series II continues this emphasis with the infusion of knowledge into the world of physical education instructional programs. Our hope is that the Basic Stuff series can help to make this scenario a reality.

Linda L. Bain, *Editorial Committee*
University of Houston

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foreword

Concern for the psychological aspects of human performance in movement activity is not new. Coaches, dedicated teachers, and theorists of our field have long shown their awareness that the psychological dimension was important in performance. The distinguishing characteristics of the study of the psychological dimension of human movement of the past fifteen years have progressed toward systemization of knowledge and the development of ongoing organizational structures which support such study.

Prior to the decade of the seventies, research in this area primarily emphasized the application of "good" psychological theory and methodology in sport and physical education settings. In the past ten years the notion has grown that the human movement context has special and unique features demanding its own instrumentation, techniques, and conceptualizations. Professional organizations and publications which have specifically focused on psychology and physical activity benefit from these notions.

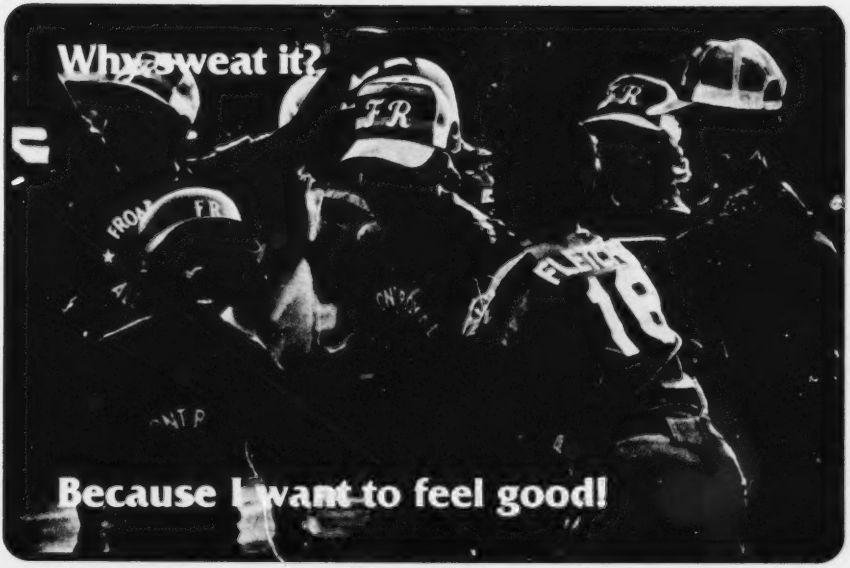
One present result of the intense effort in this subdisciplinary area is progress towards the development of taxonomies of knowledge specifying basic concepts and the relationships among them, an example of which is found in this monograph. All such efforts attempt to lift the level of endeavor from separate, isolated studies and published anthologies, to the development of integrated, middle-gauge theories of the psycho-social aspects of physical activity.

Another factor which may account for a new vitality in this area is the participation of practitioners (teachers and coaches) in the assessment of practical applications of ongoing research and the planning of new directions for research efforts. Monographs like the Basic Stuff series which familiarize more practitioners with the basic concepts in the subdisciplinary areas, can greatly enhance the possibilities of productive interaction between scholars and practitioners.

The goals for researchers, scholars, and practitioners seem, ultimately, to be very similiar: to provide knowledge and skills which aid the enrichment and empowerment of the personal lives of participants and the development of mastery in movement performance. This monograph is another step in the long process of actualizing these goals.

CHAPTER ONE

health



Photograph by Scott Forbes/Loudoun Times-Mirror

What Do You Have To Help Me?

There are many aspects of physical activity that can potentially help people feel good or feel healthy, in a physical or bodily and psychological sense. In this chapter a special focus will be placed on the ways in which physical activity affects feeling good about one's self in a psychological sense. There are three psycho-social concepts which are particularly important in helping people feel good and healthy in physical activity. These concepts are self-concept (including self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-disclosure), the "feel better" phenomenon, and positive addiction to activity.

To feel good in today's world a positive concept of self is needed. This is a valuable contribution to that healthy, growing idea of self in activity participation. Participation in activity does not automatically make a positive contribution to

self-concept. It seems clear, however, that experiencing satisfaction in performance, feeling fit and able, and understanding that many avenues of expression are open through activity, can contribute a great deal to a positive sense of self.

Positive and realistic self-concept help us to feel good

It is accepted that self-concept is a complex cluster of thoughts and feelings (all those held about I, me, my) arising from sources which are both social-external and internal. While the self-concept is changeable, it does possess enduring and semi-permanent qualities.

How Do I Get It?

Others shape self-concept through directed learning

Much of the self-concept is shaped by social learning, especially through either directed learning or observation and imitation. In a directed learning experience, for example, a child may be instructed to "watch me—do the same thing I do—throw the ball." This direction may function as a cue and the child's throws become the response. The nature of the reinforcement (positive, negative, or aversive) will influence whether the response is given again. "That is good—you can throw well!," is a reinforcement which will probably encourage the child to throw again *and* may predispose the child to define self as a doer, one who can, rather than one who cannot.

Directed learning in physical activity experiences may come from parents, the extended family members, teachers, coaches, friends, instructional written material or television. The directed learning experiences add to self-concept in at least two ways. Self-knowledge is expanded. New information is provided indicating that one does or does not have certain skills, or that one's present level of skillfulness is high or low relative to known others. Also the individual incorporates either positive or negative emotions or feelings about self *in that experience*.

Others shape self-concept through observation and imitation

Another important mode of the social learning of self-concept is observation and imitation. Many, if not all, of the sources of directed learning can also serve as knowing and unknowing models from which behaviors and attitudes are learned and adopted as one's own. If a particular person, group, or source is highly valued, then becoming like them has a high positive reinforcing effect. Being greatly different from or unlike the valued model can have an aversive reinforcing effect providing motivation for behavior and attitude change toward that of the valued model.

Photograph by Scott Forbes Loudoun Times-Mirror

Directed learning in physical activity experiences may come from parents, the extended family members, teachers, coaches, friends, instructional written material, or television.

Internal sources of self-concept are cognitive-emotional and somatic

Directed and observational learning are examples of social-external sources of self-concept. There are internal sources of self-concept as well. Individuals can expand their own self-knowledge bases by introspection and self-observation. Behavior and attitudes can be influenced by self-administration of positive rewards or punishment. If you admire certain qualities in yourself and you want to keep them or increase them, you give yourself rewards when you actualize or reflect these qualities. If there is something in your self you want to eliminate or change, you administer self-punishment when you manifest that quality. Knowledge of and reaction to changes in self greatly influence self-concept by these methods. These knowledges and feelings form *cognitive* and *emotional* sources of self-concept. Perceptions formulated as a function of bodily information (of height, weight, pain, tightness, quickness) become *somatic* sources of self-concept. These cognitive-emotional and somatic sources may be used in self-reinforcement of qualities valued by preference or some overriding goals formed in relation to an ideal self-concept.

Self-concept can be shaped by objective sources

In addition to both external and internal sources of self-concept, we also can look to "objective" sources such as photographs, height and weight records, medical records, physical performance records, and the like.

Self-concept exists in the form of content

The self-concept can be thought of as being both content (discrete information) and structure (predisposing dispositions). In a fully functioning person, innumerable bits of self-knowledge are stored, each with its own valence of positive or negative feeling. For example, a given person may hold either one of the following characterizations which are based on similar self-knowledge:

Characterization A	Characterization B
I am 6'10" tall and I love it.	I am 6'10" tall and I hate it.
Being 6'10" enables me to excel in basketball. I value that. Others value that a lot.	Being 6'10" enables me to excel in basketball but so what! I don't care about that. Who does?
My physical education teacher said my height might help me to receive an athletic scholarship to college. Ms./Mr. _____ has been right about things before.	My physical education teacher said my height might help me to receive an athletic scholarship. What does (s)he know?
I really like volleyball better than basketball. I think I will try out for spiker/hitter on a USVBA team.	I really like volleyball better than basketball. Why can't I do that instead of basketball?

Self-concept exists in the form of structure

There are many discrete elements of self-knowledge and attached feelings expressed on the previous page. A very small amount of the individual's total self-concept is expressed. We also can hear, in the two characterizations, a glimmering of the self-concept functioning as a *structure* of the individual's thought processes.

Once the self-concept becomes fairly extensive, it exerts a relatively stable influence on an individual's perceptions. The self-concept functions to predispose the individual to see events in specific ways, and to evaluate self in specific ways. For example, in Characterization B there was a tendency expressed to look negatively on the information at hand and to feel powerless to change situations so that one's own needs were better met. The complete knowledge we have about self, from internal and external sources, and the feelings we attach to that knowledge becomes a complex, predisposing condition which aids (on the one hand) in organizing the massive amount of information we receive from all sources, all the time. On the other hand, if the "predisposition" takes a negative direction in regard to the body and what it can do, decisions to *avoid* participation or the tendency to be excessively critical *in* participation, are hard to overcome. The self-concept functioning as structure is a powerful and pervasive source of benefit or detriment in an individual's life.

Why?

The self-concept encompasses all aspects of the individual of which movement-oriented concerns are a part. These concerns are important, however, and we can conceptualize four possible consequences of any movement activity concerning the self-concept.

	Self-concept positive	**Self-concept negative**
Movement experience *Positive*	*Experience enhances concept.	*Experience undermines present concept. May change to positive.
Movement experience *Negative*	Experience undermines present concept, may change to negative.	Experience reinforces present concept. Remains negative.

*Effect is to help the individual feel better.

Professional physical educators have two kinds of opportunities to constructively influence the self-concept of individu-

als with whom they are in contact. They have the opportunity to structure movement activity situations so that the participants will feel positively about themselves during activity. They have the opportunity to help participants see possible growth in negative movement experiences they may have had before. The following are examples of ways this might occur:

1. Individuals may be enabled to see growth and improvement of own performance in the midst of loss and partial failure.
2. Individuals may be enabled to see alternative patterns of participation to offset structural limitations each may have . . . "why not gymnastics instead of basketball?" "why not improve from 1 to 4 push-ups instead of quitting because you can't do 10?"
3. Enable participants to see specific methods of improving elements which accounted for critical weaknesses. Help individuals see that they are *not* forever stuck where they are.
4. Enable individuals to realistically identify factors which were beyond human control, i.e., luck is involved to some extent in most sport forms.
5. Enable individuals to see the benefits of self-disclosure in relation to participation.

Self-disclosure can enhance self-concept

The psychologist Jourard developed the concept of self-disclosure. In his work there were two basic tenets: if people do not know who, what, how they are, they will sicken; no one can know self except as an outcome of disclosing self to others. Jourard believed that all of the aspects of self-concept about which we have been talking, including the self in physical activity, are perceived, clarified, and understood as we share them with others. In Jourard's research, verbal material involving tastes, interests, opinions, and work were often shared. Low disclosure material included money, personality, and (important to us) information about the body. Clearly, if an environment can be created wherein participation is followed by self-disclosure in an atmosphere of honesty and sensitivity and nurturance, the possibilities of self-concept enrichment are great.

It may be valuable at this point to describe a concrete example. Let us suppose that in a physical education class there is a boy who is very heavy for his age and who does not have sufficient strength to manage the weight and, consequently, does not move well. Let us suppose also that the physical education teacher has structured in the class experiences the submitting of a journal in which students recount

events of the class and personal reactions. This journal is a kind of safe, self-disclosure to the teacher. About halfway through the semester, the boy decides the teacher really can be trusted and he fills most of the pages with painful recollections of class failure and rejections and how negatively he regards himself. The teacher does not respond by telling the boy he is "crazy," by denying the realities of the weight/strength imbalance, the resultant motor problems, and classmate responses to these deficiencies. The teacher can, however, having the insights provided by the disclosure, embark upon a course which among other things may enable the student to a) see causes for the situation other than total self-blame and guilt; b) evaluate present strengths and weaknesses and better choose appropriate class/sport roles wherein areas of progress can be noted and all performance is not categorized as failure; c) make plans to improve the ratio of strength to weight.

What Else?

Self-esteem is an important aspect of self-concept

The psychologist Harry Stock Sullivan postulated many years ago that the self-system had three aspects: good-me; bad-me; not me. Sullivan, and innumerable psychologists and educators since that time have indicated the great importance almost all of us attach to actualizing and extending the "good-me." We want so much to think highly of ourselves and to see ourselves regarded highly by others. This topic is discussed in a more extended fashion in Chapter Four in which affiliated needs are discussed. For now, remember that the direction of feelings held about each aspect of self-concept (positive or negative) and the strength of those feelings form what is referred to as self-esteem or self-regard. This psychological quality of self-esteem is also very influential on our own behavior. For example, research has shown that a positive self-evaluation of performance on a task greatly increases the probability that the task will be attempted again and the expectancies will be toward success rather than failure. A negative self-evaluation has the reverse effect. A positive self-evaluation increases the willingness of the individual to report that he compares favorably with the remaining performers. In experimental conditions wherein subjects were induced to have low opinions of their performances, they reported *liking* people a lot who complimented or esteemed

them, even if these esteemers didn't seem to have good judgement!

A sense of adequacy or competency in movement activities has clearly been shown to be important to males even before Coleman's definitive work on the adolescent society clarified that being an athlete was the most esteemed position in high school. The problem around esteem for males in physical activity is quite different than that for females. Neither problem, however, is small or to be lightly regarded. For males, a way must be found for all to have access to esteem, rather than only the elite few selected for varsity participation in a few, highly valued sports. The professional physical educator should take whatever steps are possible to increase esteem for personal progress and effort as well as for replication of professional and/or Olympic-level performance.

For females, the value structure must be changed in at least two dimensions in order that self-esteem in physical activity can become a reality. Esteem must be accessible through progress and effort, just as with males. Additionally, esteem must become accessible for personal participation rather than through vicarious spectator or cheerleader roles.

What Else?

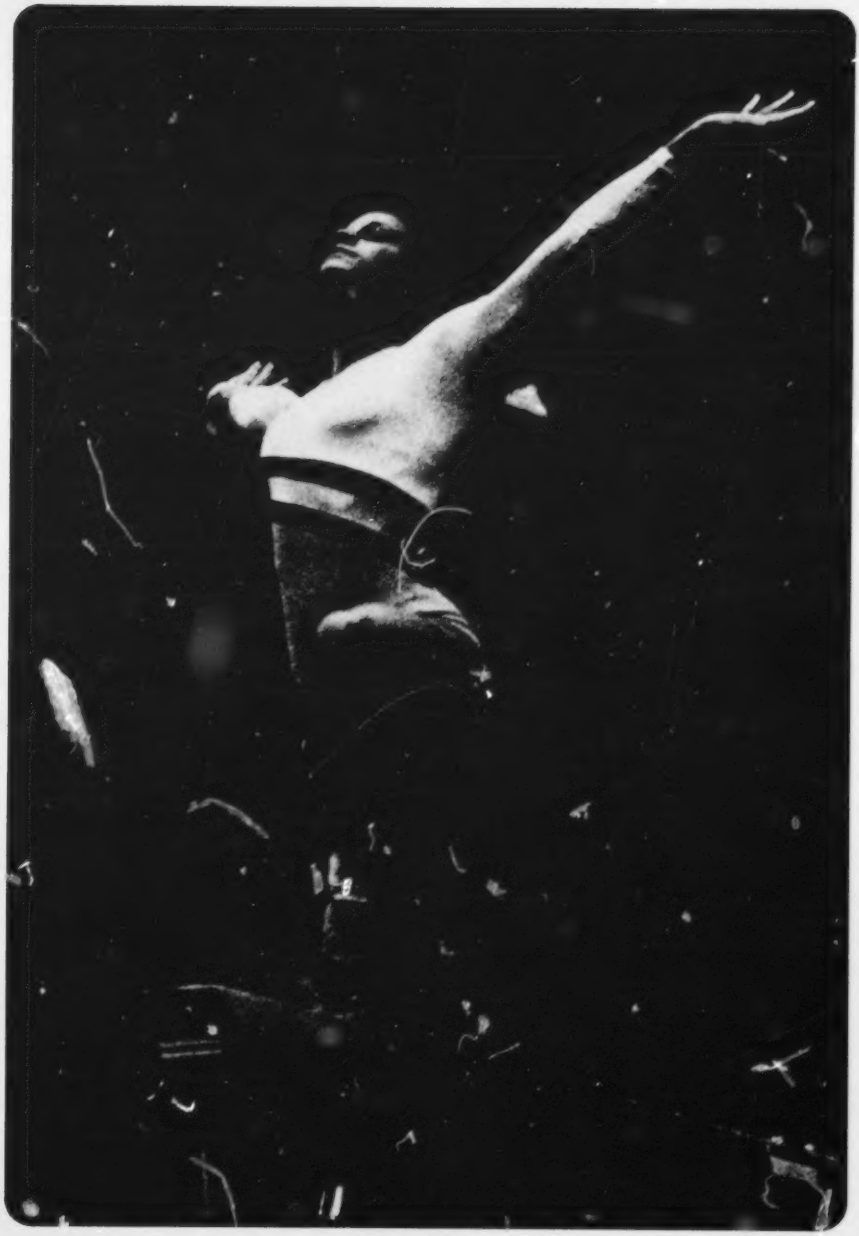
There is something that needs to be identified in this discussion which could easily go unnoticed. Dorothy Harris[1] and other researchers have noted that among the most persistent reported motivations for participation in physical activity is the notion that "I feel better for it." For many people, participating in activity yields a feel good state so that they want to return to it again and again.

Perceptions of health and fitness help individuals feel good

LaChance, in a large scale review of motivations for physical activity, identified three possible bases for the "feel better" response.[2] Individuals may feel better because they believe that health and fitness are being increased by the participation. Apart from any objective measures of whether health status is being changed, the positive belief seems to be accompanied by good feelings.

Perceptions of freedom help individuals feel good

The feel better response seems to be related to freedom experiences. In differing studies, ideas were expressed such as the joy of self-expression, release from restraints of ordinary clothing and job responsibility, or the freedom to choose their own activity and structure the play experience as each saw fit.



For females, esteem must be accessible through progress and effort and accessible for personal participation rather than through vicarious spectator or cheerleader roles.

Aesthetic movement experiences help an individual feel good

It was also reported that feeling better was a result of an aesthetic aspect of the participation. Participants described the euphoria of being lost in the activity. Harris observes,

> "the kinesthetic satisfaction experienced within physical activity centers around the sensitivity and awareness associated with the body in motion . . . the variations in stimulations such as sport and dance may provide are necessary to keep kinesthetic awareness and to continue to provide joy and satisfaction in doing."[3]

What Else?

Positive addiction helps in feeling good

The other psychological contribution of vigorous, regular physical activity (along with a perception of feeling better) is what has been called positive addiction.

William Glasser first coined the term positive addiction to describe processes he believed to be psychologically and physiologically supportive in contrast to negative addiction to agents such as drugs.[4]

Sachs presents a succinct definition of exercise addiction: psychological and/or physiological dependence on a regular regimen of activity so that recognizable withdrawal symptoms are experienced when the need remains unmet after 24-36 hours.[5] Glasser proposed that a period of two years were necessary for addiction to occur but Sachs and others have reported addiction development within four to six months.

Exercise addiction is a relatively new concept and a great deal more is unknown about the concept than is known. Its importance in this context is, however, the quality of urgency perceived by the individual about his physical activity participation. In today's fast-paced, complex world, there are many times demands and few imperative calls for action based on survival needs. It is very easy to be inactive. The perception of addiction may provide the consistency of motivation which leads to life-long adherence to a reasonable physical activity program. In a self-perpetuating cycle, then, the individual seems to "feel better" in many ways subsequently. As Harris concludes,

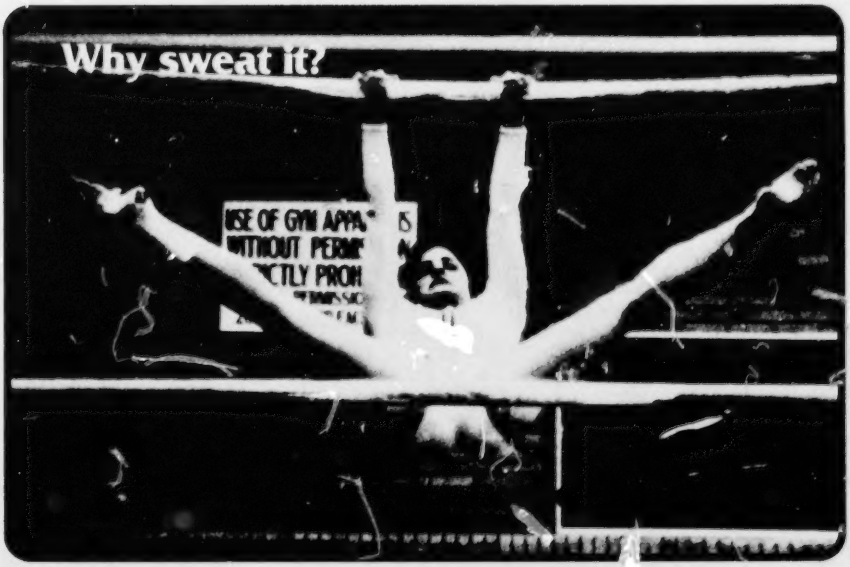
> "Feelings of healthy tiredness from physical exertion, joy and sense of unity that come with coordinated movement, and . . . vigor that comes with training and conditioning, are characteristic responses of those who participate in *regular* vigorous activity."[6]

Photograph by Scott Forbes/Loudoun Times-Mirror

The perception of exercise addiction may provide the consistency of motivation which leads to life-long adherence to a reasonable physical activity program.

CHAPTER TWO

appearance



Photograph courtesy of Temple University

What Do You Have To Help Me?

Body image exists in the form of content

In psychological terms, the picture we carry around of ourselves is called the body image. In Chapter One, the self-concept and body image as an important component of self-concept was discussed.

Body image, like self-concept, may be thought of as content and structure. We could each produce a hundred or more adjectives to describe ourselves or list concrete facts which describe us. For example: I am quick. I weigh one hundred twenty five pounds. These ideas and opinions are the content of the body image.

The body image becomes more than content, however. As we grow and learn things about ourselves and our bodies, we invest this knowledge with meaning and value. As Valerie Hunt has stated, "Body image is more than fact and reality. It

is fantasy with feelings and attitudes derived from the value system of society."

Body image exists in the form of structure

As a boy or girl builds the body image, the nature of it begins to influence the quality of the individual's perceptions and the activities the boy or girl will or will not participate in. The body image becomes a structural element of personality and becomes an influence on behavior in its own right. For example, when a boy or girl characterizes self as "athletic" or "not athletic," this belief itself becomes part of any thinking and/or decision process concerning physical activity.

So we can state, in summary, that an individual's body image has cognitive elements (size estimations, shape estimations, psychological factor identifications) and affective-emotional elements. These emotional elements primarily consist of the positive/negative valence of feelings attached to each of the cognitive elements and their sum, the overall body image. Whether or not we "look good" to ourselves is partly a function of objective facts and partly a function of our society and its values.

Body image arises from social sources

Information about one's own body comes initially from somatic (bodily) sources. Physical energy, in forms of light, sound waves, and the like are transformed by sensory organs into nervous energy which is transmitted to the brain for decoding and encoding. In the brain, this nervous energy is organized and invested with meaning. The meanings have differing emotional consequences. Rather similar objective facts can lead to characterizations of being "skinny", "slim", or "slender." The differences in how it feels to be "skinny", rather than "slim", comes from social, rather than somatic, sources. The body image, is very much environmentally influenced and comparatively derived. That is, in answer to the question, "are you tall?" the individual may well respond with a description of self in relation to significant others in his environment. A boy who is 5'11", in a family where no one else is taller, may have a body image of tallness. A boy who is 5'11", in a family in which everyone else is 6 feet or better, may have a body image of shortness. The sources of body images are partly somatic and partly social.

Why?

Feelings about own body image are greatly influenced by social stereotypes

There are at least two ways that some understanding of body image may help in efforts to look good, to yourself and others. First, like it or not, we must acknowledge that there is some stereotyping done by others, about each of us, based

upon how we look. One important aspect of stereotyping is based on the form of our bodies.

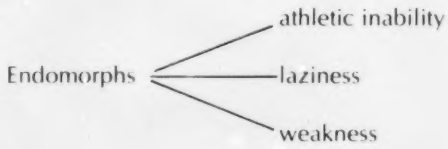
Many years ago, the psychologist Sheldon suggested that there were psychological qualities associated with each of three basic body types.

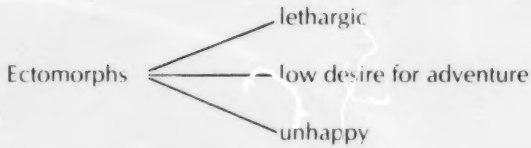
Endomorphy — spherical

Ectomorphy — linear

Mesomorphy — inverted V (athletic)

Sheldon, and researchers after him, have explored the correlations between body and psychological quality with mixed results. Research still indicates, however, that there appears to be a naive-intuitive belief operating which attributes positive social expectancies to mesomorphs and negative expectancies to the other two types.[8] In studies involving five-year olds, elementary school age children, college students, and middle-aged males, the following attributions were made.





Clearly such social stereotypes are inaccurate and unfair in many, if not most, situations. It appears that, until it is demonstrated otherwise, many individuals assume that a person who "doesn't look good", e.g., too heavy or too slender, may possess some undesirable traits. If looking good to others, in a physical and psychological sense, is perceived as something which is very important, some strong steps may need to be taken to change the body at the heart of the body image.

There is a different way to look at the body image issue, however; that is, to take a long look at the assumptions underlying these social "ideals" of body types and rejecting them. For instance, the "mesomorph female" was once considered a social anomaly and the fragile ectomorph was the model of femininity. For a female to "look good" under such social standards required being very unhealthy. Have those around

Courtesy of The Reston Times

As a person builds his body image, the nature of it begins to influence the quality of the individual's perceptions and the activities in which he will or will not participate.

you identified what it means to "look good"? How much of that idealized body is media hype and how much is really you? What are aspects of your body you don't like? What are positive things that you could say about these elements of self you have always thought you should hate?

The old/present body image you have is part fact and part social-fantasy. You learned it. You were not born with it. You can change the form and capabilities of your body if you want to do so and your body image can be changed just as well. You can also become happier with the body and body image which is yours now. What will it be?

CHAPTER THREE

achievement

Photograph by Scott Forbes/Loudoun Times-Mirror

What Do You Have To Help Me?

Achievement-related motives affect the ability to do better in activity

Doing better in our society is often described as achieving. Over the past forty years there has been a great deal of research on achievement motives in general education. This is undoubtedly because achieving is so important in the American society. Recently study has also begun on achievement in sport. Sport well fits the definition of an achievement situation: outcome challenging and uncertain; behavior evaluated by standards of excellence; individual perceives the outcome determined primarily by skill and not by chance.

Resultant achievement motive is equal to the tendency to fail subtracted from the tendency to succeed

Psychologists and educators believe that an important factor in achieving (doing better) is resultant achievement motive. The *tendency to succeed* (Ts) minus the *tendency to fail* (Tf) is equal to *resultant achievement motive* (RAM). Both of these tendencies (Ts and Tf) are determined by the relative

strength of three other factors: motives; probabilities; incentives. Thus for a given individual in a given situation, if we could calculate the strength of motive to succeed, probability of success, and incentive to succeed and subtract from that the motive to fail, probability of failure and incentive to fail, we could calculate the individual's resulting achievement motivation. It is important to note that motives toward success or failure are internal to the individual but probabilities and incentives for success and failure are situational and external to the individual.

A concrete example of resultant achievement motivation may be even more helpful in understanding than attempts at precise definitions.

Two individuals enter a racquetball tournament at school. Player A and Player B are both high in need to achieve and they are virtually equal in their ability. Thus their motives toward success/failure are equal and their probability of winning the tournament are equal with regard to skill. The tournament prize is a new racket. Player A is wealthy and already has three rackets. Player B is poor and plays with the university-issued equipment. The incentive for success is very high for Player B, resultant achievement motive would be higher for Player B, and, in this orderly theoretical world, Player B wins the tournament. It is the old cliche about the "hungry" player being the more successful. In reality, resultant forces are much more complex and difficult to predict, but these concepts give us a beginning point to improve understanding of our own performance.

What Else?

Fear of failure affects performance in physical activity

Need to fail affects performance in physical activity

Fear of success affects performance in physical activity

Successful performance may be brought about by either need to achieve or fear of failure. Failing performance may be brought about by either a desire to fail or fear of success. There seem to be four different and related patterns of behavior which are involved in achievement situations: need to achieve; fear of failure; need to fail; fear of success.

The need to achieve is a relatively stable disposition to strive for success. An individual with a high need to achieve has a positive approach tendency toward achievement-oriented situations and a positive success tendency.

The fear of failure is a relatively stable disposition to avoid failure. The individual avoids participation in achievement-oriented activities. Attempts are made to restructure situations

Photograph by Kit Brundage

The tendency to succeed and the tendency to fail are determined by the relative strength of motives, probabilities, and incentives.

as non-competitive. When all avoidance strategies are to no avail, individuals with a high degree of fear of failure often succeed.

The need to fail is a relatively stable tendency towards failure. The individual with high n fail has a positive approach tendency towards achievement-oriented situations and a negative tendency towards success.

The fear of success is a relatively stable tendency to avoid success because of its negative consequences.

Table 1. Achievement-related motives.

	Approach to achievement	*Success tendency*
n Achievement	+	+
f Failure	−	+
n Failure	+	−
f Success	−	−

It should be noted that the need to achieve and fear of failure have been well studied and documented for males. Information on these factors for females is progressing. Fear of success has recently been identified for study, initially in females and now in males as well. The need to fail is a theoretical factor which has not been well investigated. Racial differences and similarities in achievement-related motives have not been well investigated as of yet. These are important areas for future research.

Competitiveness is one form of achievement-related behavior

When studying achievement-related factors in sport, it is helpful to shift the focus slightly away from the need to achieve and to instead consider the related quality of competitiveness. The need to achieve has been described as a broad system of goal-directed activity. No single type of human response is specified. The quality of competitiveness involves the need to achieve and, further, implies that this need will be met by responses in a competitive situation.

What Else?

The competitive process has four parts:

1. objective competitive situation

Competition is a process having four categories of events. The first category is the objective competitive situation. The objective competitive situation is one in which comparison of an individual's performance is made with some standard in the presence of at least one other person who is aware of the criteria for comparison and who can evaluate the comparison process.[9]

Photograph by Scott Forbes/Loudoun Times-Mirror

In an objective competitive situation, a comparison of the individual's performance is made with some standard in the presence of at least one other person aware of the criteria for comparison and who can evaluate the comparison process.

2. **Subjective competitive situation**
3. **response**
4. **consequences**

The second category of events to be recognized, in order to better understand competition, is the subjective competitive situation. This aspect of competition is defined as the way in which an individual perceives, accepts, and evaluates the objective aspects of the competitive situation.

The third category is simply the behavioral response of the person in the situation.

The fourth category is composed of the positive and/or negative consequences for the individual that flow from the success or failure outcome of the situation.

To illustrate that these definitions can help increase understanding of competitiveness and the competitive situation, try to use each concept in another imaginary example.

A jogger, moving down the road alone, may be in a competitive endeavor but we cannot know that. On the contrary, the individual may be having an aesthetic experience only in this run. This is the primary reason that Martens's definition of the objective competitive situation requires, in our example, an observer or fellow runner aware that a five minute mile is excellent for a distance runner and that a ten minute mile is a "jog pace." Also the observer must have some means of assessing how fast the jogger is traveling. The comparison of the jogger's pace with some existing standard, in the presence of the knowledgeable other, assures us that an objective competitive situation has been created.

The way in which the jogger perceives the run, feels about the run, evaluates the chances of success and failure and the consequences of success and failure comprise aspects of the subjective competitive situation. Stable traits or attributes of the jogger such as self-esteem and anxiety are very much a part of the subjective aspects of this competition.

The jogger's time for completing the run, the amount of sweating and level of heart rate are examples of behavioral responses to the competitive situation.

The possible consequences of the jogger's responses are many and varied. Completing the run in record time would probably yield positive self-esteem, at least temporarily. Not being able to complete the run would lead to negative self-evaluations except in the peculiar circumstance wherein an individual might wish to fail. A female, for example, needing validations of her own sexuality, who also believed that "females are not capable of long distance running", might feel very positive sexuality validations in being unable to complete a lengthy jog. A positive feeling about failure is an example of what can become comprehensible to us when we have concept tools to analyze the competitive situation.

Photograph by Scott Forbes/Loudoun Times-Mirror

Data on females indicates that they have lower beliefs in their own abilities and lower expectations of success.

What Else?

Competitive stress affects performance in physical activity

In order to enable individuals to perform better in physical activity, the effects of competitive stress or anxiety need to be examined. Before dealing with competitive stress, let us examine briefly the more general concepts of trait and state anxiety. Anxiety has been simply defined as the perception of psychological or physical danger. The level of anxiety which is ordinary for the individual is called trait anxiety. The level of anxiety experienced in any specific situation, including a competitive one, is called state anxiety.

Examinations of state anxiety in achievement-oriented situations have shown it to be a function of uncertainty of outcome and the incentive value (both intrinsically and extrinsically) of success/failure. As the uncertainty of success rises to its maximum, e.g., two players are virtually equal in ability and each has almost the same chance of victory, and the incentives for success or failure increase, the probability of a situation being perceived as anxiety-producing also increases.

Competitive trait anxiety is the tendency to perceive any competitive situation as threatening. Competitive state anxiety is the individual's response to a given competitive situation.

It may be helpful to think of anxiety as a continuum with a low end signifying arousal and/or attentiveness and a high end signifying stress and performance breakdown. A good deal of research points out that for any given person, on any given task, there is a theoretical "optimal arousal level." To attain the optimal arousal level, the performer must avoid both boredom and competitive stress. This stress is the perceived imbalance between the demands of the objective competitive situation and the response capability of the individual under conditions where failure has important consequences.[10]

It is possible, again, to use a concrete example to demonstrate the value of understanding these concepts in order to enhance performance in physical activity. A given objective competitive situation has a specific level of threat attached to it. Let us say we are speaking of the physical danger attendent to hang gliding from a cliff. Participant A's subjective competitive situation is marked by high trait anxiety. The successful preparation for the same event must be entirely different for these two participants: Participant A must "psych down" to optimal arousal while Participant B must "psych up." A "coach" of both participants who tried to help through a single pre-event discussion would be doomed for failure.

Educators and psychologists have been interested in potential sources of achievement motivation for a long time. There are certain characteristics that seem to appear often in research on high achievers. High achievers tend to come from upwardly mobile middle class backgrounds, be children of educated parents, be first born. The quality of high achievement motivation seems to be a socialized trait very much influenced by certain child-rearing factors including: relatively early demands for accomplishments; intense emotional rewards for accomplishments; relatively high goals set by parents for children; interest and involvement of parents in the child's achievement endeavors. Parental indulgence and carelessness result in low achievement motivation. Mothers of high achieving girls were less affectionate and less nurturing than mothers of low achieving girls. Overprotectiveness was negatively associated with achievement motivation for girls.

It should be assumed that achievement motivation is only affected by childhood occurrences. The enhancement of achievement motivation is a lifetime goal, both generally and in physical activity.

Four steps have been identified in this enhancement process:

1. developing an achievement syndrome — specific behaviors, characteristic of high achievers, are learned, i.e., having a realistic aspiration level, preferring intermediate rather than high or low risk situations; being better able to delay gratification, persevere at tasks and better recalling mistakes or weaknesses following a competitive situation;
2. self-study — introspection indicates the potential significance of achievement in life and/or career;
3. goal-setting — an individual can be coached in how to do this and to measure progress in meeting goals;
4. interpersonal support — individuals and/or groups must be found who will give warmth and support for personal achievement.

Attribution of cause affects performance in physical activity

Doing better in physical activity can be enhanced by yet another psycho-social process. Let us look again at the four stages of competitive process and focus our attention this time on stage four. This is the category of positive and negative consequences for the individual based on success or failure in the competition. These positive and/or negative consequences are, to a large extent, the result of the *reasons* to which one *attributes* the outcome of the competition.

In psychology, there has been an effort to investigate human beings' casual explanations for everyday events like the outcomes of competition. This investigation, culminating in the development of attribution theory, examines the process of making a causal explanation and the implications of choosing/believing one exp'anation rather than another.

The diagram below illustrates the attribution process.

At the first point in the process, a competitive situation yields a win/loss outcome. The individual views the outcome in the context of available information. How close was the contest? What was the intensity and level of competition? An idea is then formulated about why the outcome was as it was. This attribution of cause affects the individual's feelings about the contest and future expectancies of success or failure. These feelings and expectancies, in turn, greatly affect decisions about future participation.

Figure 2 (right) gives typical attributions for wins and losses. The four most commonly identified factors are circled.

Why?

The study of causal attribution has added understanding and insight to observations of human behavior in many situations in addition to sports. Data on high achieving males indicates that they tend to attribute success (winning) to ability and trying hard. They tend to attribute failure to not trying hard enough. This attribution often leads to subsequent intensified effort. Thus we see the motivating effects of failure on high achieving males.

Data on females indicates they have lower beliefs in their own abilities and lower expectations of success. Therefore when women succeed (win), they are more likely to attribute this to luck. Thus future expectancies for success are not much raised by a win and the female may take less pride in her accomplishment.

In general it appears that more positive effects for the individual appear when intentional, internal, and stable factors are emphasized along with "good ol' trying hard." There are, however, some cautions that should be noted. Some data indicates that high achieving black college students exhibited a balance of internal and external causes for success/failure attributions. The ability to see that "system blame," i.e., factors external to self, can explain some failures, seemed important for the young black students tested. It appears reasonable

Figure 1. Attribution Process.

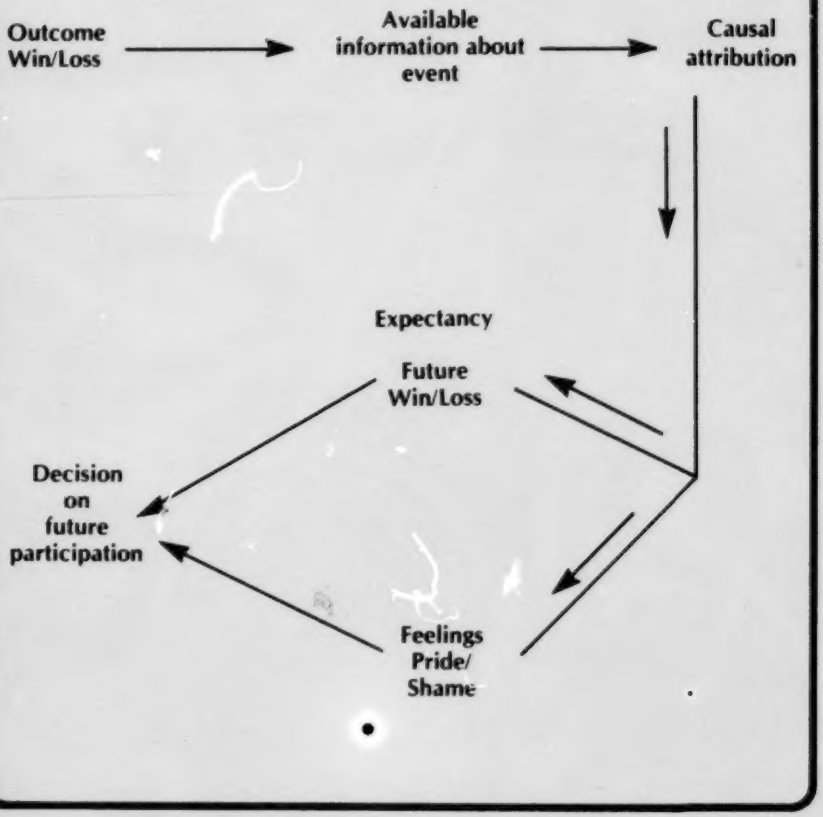


Figure 2. Attributions for wins/losses.

← Intentional	(Intended)	
	Stable	Unstable
Internal	Training Practice	Effort
		Fair/Unfair Desire to win
External	Coaching Teammate support	Fan support Bias of officials
← Unintentional	(Unintended)	
	Stable	Unstable
Internal	Ability	Mood Nervous
External	Task difficulty	Luck
	Ability of others	Officials' errors Situational factors

Photograph by Scott Forbes Loudoun Times-Mirror

After wins and losses, it is important for teachers and coaches to ask questions of the participants about their explanations for the outcome.

to postulate that for individuals of all races, participating in sport, there are occasions when it is important to recognize that external factors were a dominant influence on the outcome.

After wins and losses, it seems important for teachers and coaches to ask questions of participants, especially very youthful ones, about their explanations for the outcome. On occasion, participants may take exaggerated responsibility for losses, feel intense pain and shame, and curtail future participation, all without expressing their attributions to others.

Attentional style affects performance in physical activity

Doing better can also be enhanced by an understanding of another human quality which is called attentional style. This refers to an individual's habitual patterns of concentration or attention. Robert Nideffer's work on this concept has been invaluable.[11] He reminds us that every individual concerned with improving performance is faced with problems of learning what to attend to, what to ignore, when to attend to each cue, and how to be able to maintain attention at critical times.

Nideffer suggests there are two important dimensions to a performer's attentional field: width of the field; direction of the focus of the field. Thus four patterns of attention may be observed. Dominance of a particular pattern lends itself to successful performance in specific situations. In a similar fashion, dominance of a counter-productive pattern of attention can bring a disastrous outcome.

Pattern

Broadfield — internal focus
: This pattern lends itself to successful strategy development: training schedules, game plans, and the like.

Broadfield — external focus
: This pattern aids the performance of the "field general"; quarterback, team captain, teacher responsible for noon recess supervision at an elementary school.

Narrowfield — internal focus
: This pattern is a meditative-like state. It may be valuable for performers who need to control or minimize anxiety prior to a test or competition event.

Narrowfield — external focus
: Pattern is conducive to performance as baseball/softball hitter or pass receiver or tennis player.

The brief characterizations of each style are sketchy, intended to give a flavor only of the core of each. Optimal performance in most physical activity requires the ability to

attend in each of these four styles, virtually at will. Nideffer's work indicates, however, that under stress, the ability to shift attention diminishes. The direction of deterioration appears to proceed from broad to narrow and from external to internal. Thus the individual whose most comfortable attentional pattern is narrow-internal has the greatest potential difficulty in performing under stress.

Diagnostic testing of one's self, classes, and/or teams in this psychological factor could probably be arranged through a qualified psychology or sport psychology professional. Nideffer indicates that many individuals can develop and increase attentional control through a supervised program which would probably include the following steps.

1. Learning *critical* attentional cues for the various stages of skill performance and game strategy.
   Ex. When considering merely the backswing of a golf stroke, there are scores of potential perceptua[1] cues lurking around the performer. Simply thinking the word "stretch" may be the critical organizing cue for that particular moment.
2. Rehearsing, using these critical cues.
3. Tension reduction which may take the form of progressive relaxation, meditation; biofeedback-trained techniques.

Nideffer's work easily leads us to the concluding segment of this chapter. Three intervention strategies will be described which are modified from therapeutic programs and promise to enable individuals to continue to "do better" in activity.

Stress reduction can help in doing better

More research is needed on these techniques and qualified professionals are needed to guide the teacher's/coach's use of them but they may provide the basis for the next great area of advancement in sport performance. In this section, attention will be given to stress reduction, thought-stopping and self-talk.

Various means have been employed by athletes and coaches to enhance performance through stress reduction. Rotella[12] described a key difference in stress management between moderately successful and champion athletes. The moderately successful performer made the "work of worry" a dominant concern. The champion was much more likely to have identified and contemplated weaknesses *and* devised extensive and specific plans and strategies to overcome them.

Other researchers recommend a four-stage approach which utilizes a variety of techniques.[13] First, the performer learns some form of progressive relaxation. Most reports suggest the relaxation program proceeds from tensing muscle

groups extensively to relaxing them completely and then moving to a state of readiness.

Another technique for stress reduction is the use of autogenic words or phrases both preliminary to and during competition. Performer may think such words as calm, serene, cool lake, tranquil, or the like.

A third technique, which also has taken a variety of forms, is the use of imagery and imagination. Imagery has been defined as stimulus and responses produced internally which lead to physiologically measurable effects. Among the variety of uses for imagery in bettering performance are the following:

- imagining the site of the competition and identifying the areas of greatest anxiety when contemplating the scene;
- imagining pleasant experiences in order to attain a more "psyched down" state;
- experiencing how it will feel to perform specific critical moves;
- experiencing the feeling attendent to perfectly performing a specific move in slow motion and regular speed.

Rotella suggests that the best performers utilize a balance of external (1 above) and internal (3 above) imagining. He warns against an over-focus on internal images of performance mechanics.

The fourth stress reduction approach suggested by Strong and Wenz is the psycho-social technique of periodic small group meetings of performers and teachers/coaches/leaders. These meetings would permit individual issues to be aired.

Thought-stopping can aid in doing better

Yet another behavior change strategy which can be used to produce better performance is called thought-stopping and self-talk. As the label implies, this involves interrupting a destructive training thought and replacing it with positive self-statements and/or self-instruction.

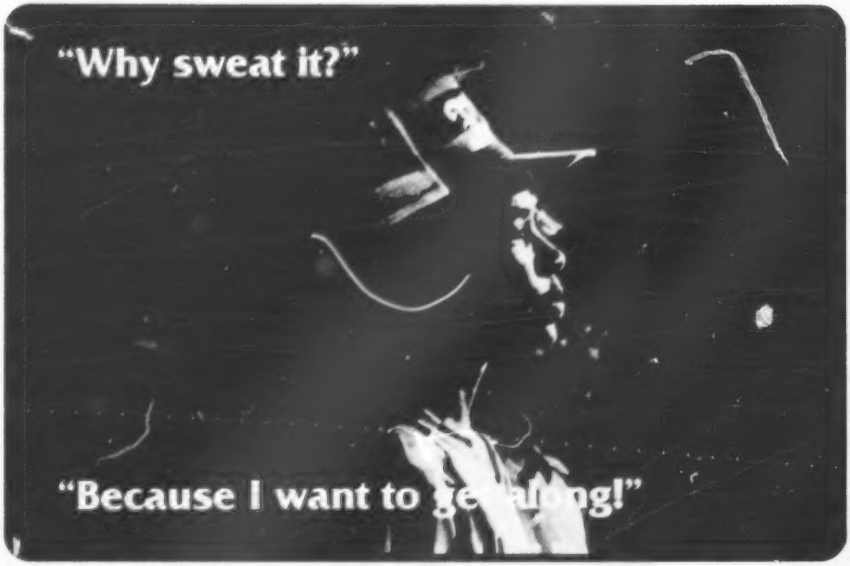
Self-talk can aid in doing better

These techniques are usually presented and guided first by a person other than the performer. Next the performer utilizes thought-stopping and self-talk with guidance. The next stage is marked by the performer utilizing the techniques in practice. Finally the performer integrates these new behaviors into actual competition. During this progression, the performer will first simply identify negative and positive self-statements often produced during competition. Situations will be identified when negative self-statements are likely to occur. At this point, working with either a coach or sport psychologist, a performer will begin to *practice* thought-stopping and self-talk whenever the negative perspective begins to emerge.

Performing better is a satisfying occurrence. No matter what the individual's current state of skillfulness, improvement is possible. In this chapter, concepts of achievement motive, patterns of attribution, attentional styles, relaxation, and positive self-monitoring have been reviewed as they can aid in the quest to perform better.

CHAPTER FOUR

psycho-social



Photograph by Scott Forbes Loudoun Times-Mirror

What Do You Have To Help Me?

Affiliation is a very important human need

The idea of getting along implies a need for and an attraction toward other human beings. This need and attraction for others has often been called affiliation tendency and it is one of the most characteristic aspects of our species. Psychological studies of social isolation have shown that this state is perceived as very painful. The distress of isolated individuals rises to a peak and then decreases to an apathetic state which is so severe as to appear schizophrenic.[14] It seems obvious that most individuals will go to great lengths to enhance affiliations with others. The physical activity context can provide a positive environment for human affiliation needs to be met. Martens has rightly cautioned that we cannot "prove" that the sport setting produces "only" a positive context for healthy social interaction. We can illustrate how it may be utilized as a developmental setting for interpersonal competence.[15]

How?

Research has indicated several psycho-social factors which seem to intensify affiliation tendencies. The presence of and/or perceiving anxiety seems to trigger affiliative responses. The fear of being alone or separated from one's own social group is a specific source of anxiety which increases the need to affiliate. A second important factor is the need for evaluation and feedback from others. A desire for social comparison has emerged in the results of a large body of research. Such evaluation can only be found as a concomitant of social interaction. A third factor which increases affiliation responses is the need to gain approval and esteem from others.

These are examples of psychological states and/or environmental settings which we call experience. Thus the desire to affiliate and interact with others is strong within us. These affiliative needs may be met through participation in physical activity and the meeting of social needs has consistently been identified as an important reason for participation.

How?

Participation in physical activity can be an important way of meeting affiliation needs

The meeting of new people and the forming of friendships with them can occur through sport teams. Alderman states that affiliation needs may be the reasons for participation in sport teams as much as achievement needs.[16]

Alvin Zander has explained the attraction power of a team as it functions as a social unit with a task requiring a set of persons to accomplish. By definition, no one can perform the task alone.

Involvement in physical activity as a team member or an individual can alleviate perceptions of isolation. Sport activities can provide opportunities for much social interaction in a wide range of situations. Even an activity as (ostensibly) individualistic and isolated as distance running (i.e., the loneliness of the long distance runner) leads the participants to races, to meetings of running clubs or booster clubs, to athletic footwear stores and discussions of the "top line shoe," and possibly to the sports medicine center for treatment of a bone bruise.

Photograph by Michael Brannon/Loudoun Times-Mirror

The need to affiliate is triggered by the fear of being separated from one's own social group and the need for evaluation and feedback from others.

Proximity has a positive affect on affiliation

Studies of interpersonal attraction yield some hypotheses about why sport team and sport club involvement often results in affiliations and warm friendships. Proximity is a simple factor which has a positive affect on friendship development. With nothing other than the time together in the same space that sport participation provides, it is unavoidable that friendships will form.

Reciprocity of liking helps affiliation

Once positive affect begins to flow from one person toward another, the "reciprocity of liking" rule begins to take effect. We like people who like us. This reciprocity of liking could well be enhanced through participation in a sport club or the like.

Perceptions of similarity aid affiliation

A third factor, identified in attraction studies, is that liking leads to perceptions of similarities between people and perceptions of similarities lead to liking. This latter aspect of the circular pattern is what seems highly probable on a sport team or club. Many perceptions of similarity (of attitudes, interests, dress, behavior, life style) may be perceived and increased liking is often not far behind.

Cooperation toward a common goal helps affiliation

Finally researchers note that cooperative efforts toward common goals lead to increased attraction between people. It is often mentioned, in this context, that sport team members would be drawn together in this regard. Social psychologists often counterpoint competition (which they describe in vying terms) with cooperation in these examples. Sometimes it is not recognized that competitive settings are characterized by cooperation on elements such as rules, fairness, and schedule of play, much more than by conflict. It is entirely possible, desirable, and often the case, that intense "competitors" are friends and comrades in everyday life.

In attempting to identify the ways in which involvement in physical activity can enhance the meeting of social needs, it has been indicated that individual and/or team membership can alleviate isolation anxiety. Also it has been shown that certain sport setting characteristics enhance the development of liking and friendship bonds.

There are at least two other methods for enhancing the meeting of social needs through activity participation. We know that needs exist for self-evaluation from others and social comparison information. Roberts and Sutton-Smith have described the many ways in which games give opportunities to master tasks of both a social and an environmental nature.[12] The objective information provided by the various tasks of play, game, and sport provides an excellent environment for the evaluative and comparative information we seem to require.

Photograph by Scott Forbes Loudoun Times-Mirror

With nothing other than the time together in the same space that sport participation provides, it is unavoidable that friendships will form.

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Thus, for example, children seem to ask not only the question "how high can I jump," but also "how does my jump compare with other jumpers like me?" Many humanistic educators, as well as parents, shudder at the near-obsessive and vying quality of so much social comparison activity in our society. The knowledge of any competence comparison results can be destructive only when the comparison is perceived as a zero-sum game with one winner and all others as losers. Knowledge of one's own performance relative to like others is valuable and desirable information as long as all efforts do not come back with the label FAILURE stamped on top.

Related to the foregoing brief discussion is the social need for recognition and approval. Again, sport participation *may* provide an important setting for recognition and approval to be offered. Coleman's classic studies of the adolescent society clearly illustrated the social advantage of high school male athletes relative to other males. There is some evidence accumulating in recent years that gains in motor development and skill result in increases in peer acceptance and positive self-concept for individuals who are not varsity performers. It is to be hoped that this finding of increased recognition, approval, and support, for gains (however slight or large, for whatever population of people) in skillfulness is replicated in even larger degrees as time goes on.

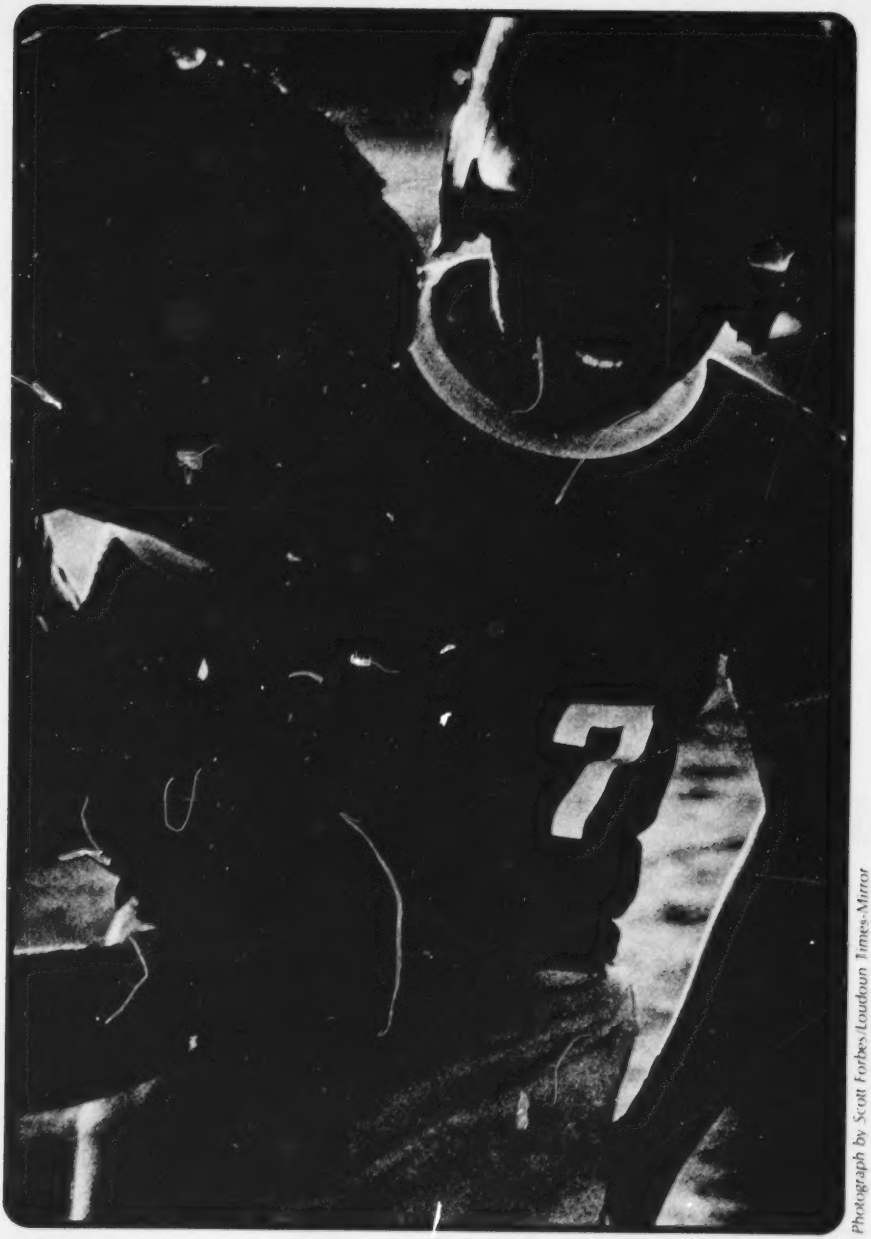
What Else?

Control of aggression is important if affiliation with others is to be enhanced

In this chapter the focus has been on the positive aspects of getting along with others (affiliation, friendship, and liking). There is another aspect of this topic which should be addressed and that is the need to control aggression. At times the competitive situation is intense, stressful, and frustrating. An important concern for leaders and participants is making sure that emotional challenges are handled with constructive interpersonal behavior rather than destructive aggression.

Aggression is defined as intent to injure

In the realm of sport and physical activity there has been confusion over the meaning of the word aggression. Psychologists and sport psychologists have defined aggression as the initiation of attack with the intent to injure. Utilizing this definition it is clear that there is no place for aggression in sport and playful physical activity. Many times the words "being aggressive" are used by coaches and performers to



Photograph by Scott Forbes/Loudoun Times-Mirror

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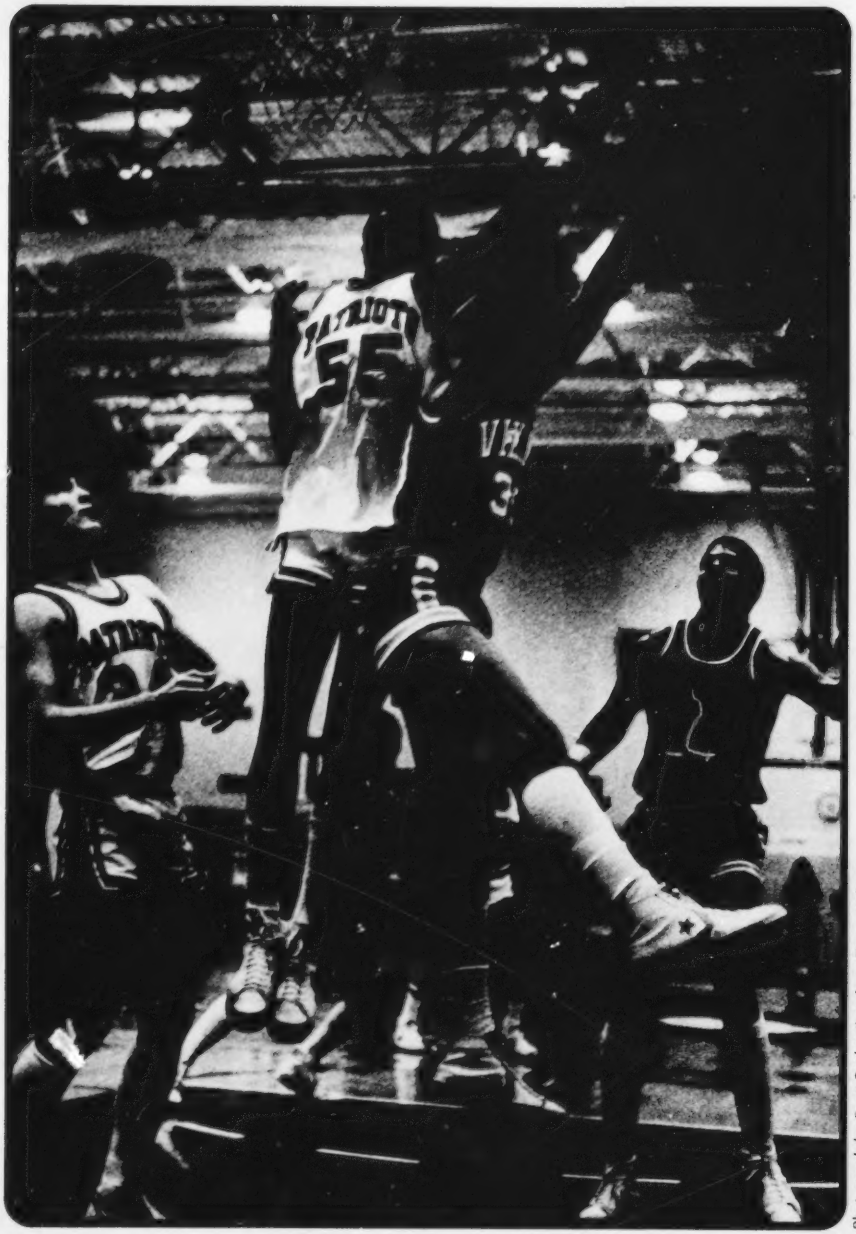


Photograph by Scott Forbes/Loudoun Times-Mirror

Dollard and others have contended that interference with goal-directed activity induces an aggressive drive and aggressive responses.

mean things other than an intent to injure another. We need to find other words to communicate what we *want* to see in performer behavior, for example, words like high active, assertive, emotionally controlled, sharp, proactive aggressive.

Coming primarily from the professional sport domain is a view that "aggressive" behavior is what fans come to see and that fights and serious injury are justified on this account. It is difficult, probably impossible, to bring this point of view to any convergence with sport and play goals emphasizing personal and social development. What Goldstein has called the "escalation of aggression" effect, i.e., violence begets violence, seems an appropriate concern for any individual wishing to see aggression levels lowered, not raised in all realms of our social world including sport.

Why?

Understanding of what accounts for the occurrence of aggression has progressed through several stages. For example, it has been believed that aggressive motivations were instinctual and/or biological. A need to aggress would build in an individual until, ultimately, it would be discharged. The catharsis value of submaximal aggression is prominently featured in such conceptions, and sport aggression is viewed as a relatively constructive example of such "positive aggression."

A second major orientation towards the development of aggressive behavior is the view of aggression as a response to frustration. Dollard and others have contended that interference with goal-directed activity induces an aggressive drive and aggressive responses. This orientation was met with criticism from anthropologists who demonstrated that in some cultures frustration was ever-present but never aggression. Child psychologists pointed out that children often regress rather than aggress in the face of frustration.

Aggression is believed to be learned conduct

The most prominent orientation towards the development of aggression at present is a social learning theory perspective. Human aggression is viewed as learned conduct which is elicited by cues or stimuli in the environment. The experiences of the individual and the reinforcements received in the experiences yield a typical response pattern to aversive experience. This response pattern may include dependency behavior, withdrawal and resignation, self-anaethetization with drugs and alcohol, constructive problem solving, *or* aggres-

sion. A very disturbing possibility generated by this theory of aggression is that some sport contexts may be providing, especially for males, instruction in how to aggress. This learned response becomes a social and personal problem for the performer in the sport situation and the possibility exists that the response will be generalized to other contexts as well.

In summary, Bredemeier has identified several justifications for a serious concern about the development of aggressive behavior in sport:[18]

- injuries appear to be increasing, due, in part, to tolerated athletic aggression;
- the social status of highly aggressive professional "stars" may lead to social learning of aggression through imitation by children and youth;
- the situation and psycho-social variables surrounding sport can create an environment conducive to violence by spectators.

Control of aggression in sport is both possible and desirable

Is it possible for aggressive behavior in sport to be controlled and/or modified? Clearly the answer to this question is yes. As individuals have learned aggressive responses, they can unlearn them and substitute them with other less destructive actions. An intent to injure others is not necessary to skillful performance nor the conduct of games and sport. Bredemeier offers suggestions about how we could go about the process of modifying and controlling athletic aggression:

- negative and aversive reinforcement (fines or forfeiture of right to play) could be consistently administered to players who aggress;
- positive reinforcements could be consistently administered to performers who excel and assiduously avoid aggression;
- various media sources could discontinue the emphasis, and implied condoning, of aggressive acts which currently occur through instant replays of violence, interviews specifically dealing with aggression apart from the contest, and the like;
- psychological support offered from professionals to performers troubled by the value conflicts they perceive when the reward for aggressive behavior exceeds its costs.

In this chapter we see that the physical activity context has an ambiguous nature with regard to the social interaction within it. It is at least partially under our own control to assure that getting along with others is positively enhanced through participation and that we do not allow destructive and asocial behavior to characterize participation.

CHAPTER FIVE

aesthetics

Photograph by Courtesy Scholastic Photography

What Do You Have To Help Me?

Turning on in physical activity is a culmination of effort

There is so much in sport, dance, and other physical activities that can potentially heighten sensation and awareness, to increase the vigor and zest with which we approach life, and to illustrate the relationship between form and function in movement, just as it is demonstrated in other arts. Many psychologists, educators, and physical educators have maintained that the experiencing of aesthetically pleasing events is an important human need and that this need can be met through movement experiences as well as through other kinds of activities. It is this kind of "turning on" to the aesthetic qualities of physical activity which has formed a new wave approach to sport and physical activity during the past few years. Several of the other chapters of this monograph address the importance of physical activity from the perspectives of

achievement motive, the "feel better" phenomenon, positive addiction, and the avoidance of negative addiction. In this section we simply emphasize that physical activity may be one of the best ways to turn on to life through a healthy and natural (non-synthetic) method. It is not, however, an easy way, requiring nothing of the participant. When theorists and elite level participants talk about movement-oriented "peak experiences" (to use Maslow's term), they describe events and feelings which are culminations of training, preparation, and study. The world they describe, however, makes the experience more than worth the cost.

Flow may be experienced in physical activities

The labels which have been applied to these peak experience states are many. Csikzentmihalyi uses the word "flow" to describe an activity which totally involves the individual, fully challenging, and in which full control is experienced. Flow is a state an individual may enter when an activity is an exquisite balance of the individual's competence and the demands of the situation. Csikzentmihalyi proposed that physical activity was an important mode through which human beings may experience flow state.

Running may be experienced as similar to meditation

Others have proposed that physical activity can lead to altered states of consciousness in a fashion similar to meditation. Kostrubala has utilized running as an adjunct to ordinary therapy. The repetitive and rhythmical movements of running are said to function like a mantra and, after practice and guidance, a meditative state can be experienced in long, slow, distance running.

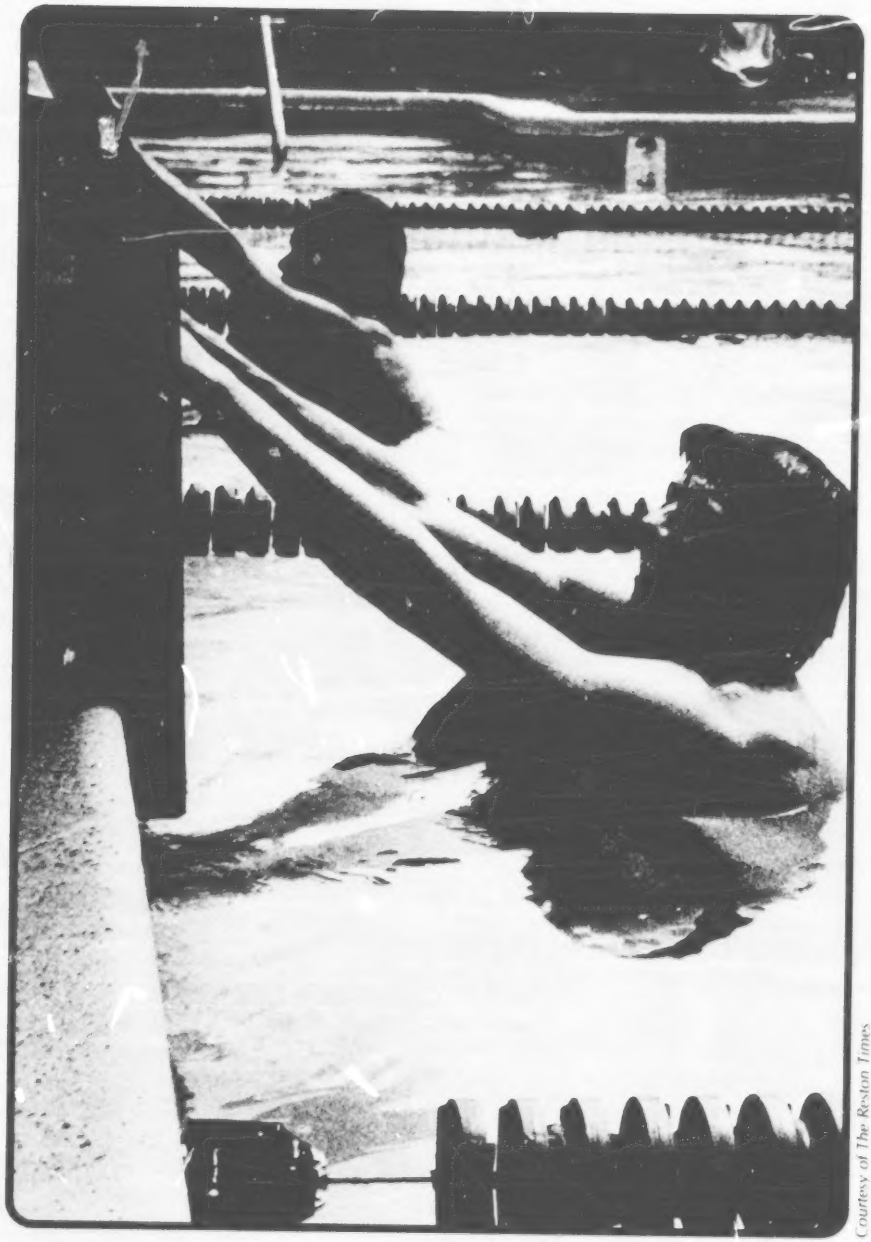
Physical activity may be experienced as similar to zen states

There is also a "zen sport" segment of this new wave approach to sport and physical activity. Its teachers advocate the importance of detachment and loss of ego in the activity. Psychological centering techniques are taught in order to quiet the mind at the same time that skills of the sport are taught. Books have been published and workshops offered around the country in this fashion under the name of "inner" tennis, running, and skiing.

All these approaches offer a welcome relief to the competitive obsession marked by an absolutely single-minded concern with "who won?"

In the author's experience, there are five necessary conditions which must be met in order for an individual to enter the flow or the peak experience state described by some performers.

1. The spirit-guide. The possibility of getting self and environment right for flow is greatly improved if the performer has



Courtesy of The Reston Times

Csikzentmihalyi used the word "flow" to describe an activity which totally involves the individual, is fully challenging, and in which full control is experienced.

Photograph by Courtesy Scholastic Photography

There is a "zen sport" segment of the new wave approach to sport and physical activity. Its teachers advocate the importance of detachment and loss of ego in the activity.

a teacher or coach who acts as a spirit guide, here intended to refer to someone who leads the performer in a way the performer has never traveled, or is able to conceive the performer as the performer never has. Imagine a little six-year old who loves to run. A parent, or a coach, or perhaps a voice from a book the child reads, says "you run so fast, you could be in the Olympics someday." Such a person or voice acts as a spirit guide changing the frame the child has around his running to encompass *not only* the neighborhood lot or a nearby meadow but also a track in another country with thousands or millions of onlookers. The here-and-now joy of running is in no way minimized. At the same time, other options and extensions of the present are clarified. For some individuals a single voice, at a single time, may be all the spirit guide needed to send them on their way. For others the guide must be a coach who leads them carefully, over time, to the new way. For others, most sadly, the guide never comes and potential dies unexpressed. For an individual to proceed *in the body* to a level never before attained, he must first conceive the new level as attainable and a spirit guide is invaluable for this.

2. Preparation and discipline. The proceeding to a new state of performance and awareness is built upon a foundation of practice and preparation of the body. The necessary strength, flexibility, and endurance, for example, must all be brought into the individual's being.

3. Competence. The new state of performance and awareness is also built upon a foundation of cognitive and neuromuscular competencies. The specific skills which comprise the activity must be over-learned and the knowledges of the strategies of the activity with regard to environment and/or other performers must be acquired.

4. Stress/challenge. Entering the flow state also requires that a special sense of challenge be present. The outcome, whatever form it may take, must be important, must have meaning and significance to the performer.

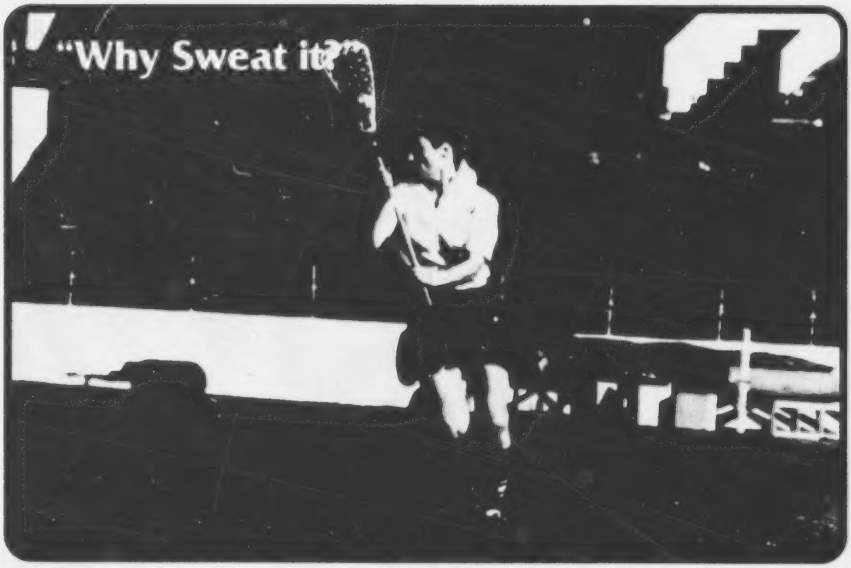
5 **Letting go.** In the last phase, the performer must give self to the activity, become totally involved. This may seem paradoxical; that after all the preparation, all the competence concern, all the development of meaning, that the performer detaches self from self and *is* the activity. The language of

individuals describing possible flow state experiences appears metaphysical and unaccessible to assessment in a scientific sense. The position of the author in this section is that such descriptions should not be discounted nor discarded simply because they are, at present, difficult to assess. If we can permit the possibility that such altered states and unknown places exist, perhaps the way of exploring them and, of leading others to them, will emerge.

This postulation of a 5-stage approach to peak experience in physical activity, does not rest on an all-or-none principle. Instead a continuum conception of flow state is envisioned. A youngster who jumps up and down with glee over the first basketball goal is experiencing what might be called "baby-flow." The "oldster" completing the first 10,000 meter race of her/his life similarly may enjoy "baby-flow." A spiraling effect is envisioned where subsequent training, skill and knowledge development, and challenge enable the individual to proceed along a way from first thrill to ultimate performance-experience or an ending place somewhere between. It seems that an individual, perceiving self as involved in such progression would feel turned on to life in a significant way.

CHAPTER SIX

coping



Photograph courtesy of Temple University

What Do You Have To Help Me?

Surviving, in our present day society, requires coping with some very tough issues. It has been an underlying theme of this monograph that one of the most important keys to survival is adherence to a regular program of physical activity. We have tried to demonstrate, in many ways, the potential positive benefits of activity. Beyond this underlying postulate, what else might be helpful in surviving and flourishing?

Avoiding negative addiction to exercise is important to surviving

A cautionary note should probably be interjected about avoiding negative addiction to exercise. We discussed in Chapter One the process of exercise addiction. Exercise-addicted individuals demonstrate psychological and/or physiological dependence upon a regularly experienced regimen of activity. In these individuals, failing to participate produces certain withdrawal symptoms within 24-36 hours.

These symptoms were feelings of irritability, tension, guilt, uneasiness, and bloatedness. In Chapter One we focused on the positive aspects of such exercise addiction. Some, relatively few individuals, pass a point where the exercise regimen moves from being an important, but reasonable, aspect of life to a controlling aspect, eliminating other life style choices. This type of exercise involvement has been labeled negative addiction. Case study data illustrates examples wherein runners were consumed by the need to run. They altered life schedules dramatically to accommodate their running, missed appointments and meetings to run, continued running when seriously injured, and neglected responsibilities of home, work, family. The toll of their training included difficulty in concentrating, listlessness, and fatigue. Clearly this is not a healthy pattern of participation.

It should be noted that relatively few exercisers enter this state because lack of adherence to exercise regimens is a much more widespread problem than is over-adherence. The key consideration is to be a committed, sensible participant, without allowing this habit, or any habit, to take control of life. The solution to this problem, once an individual is psycho-biologically addicted, requires professional assistance.[19]

What Else?

Finding activities with optimal arousal level for the participant is important to survival

A second area of concern in regard to survival skills is the ability to find and/or create situations which offer *optimal* psychological arousal; that is not too much (stress) and not too little (boredom and apathy). In Chapter Three we discussed what is referred to as stress management or control. By way of reviewing this material briefly, let us look at a Psychological Skills Training program devised by Rainer Martens and associates. Stress management was dealt with in a three-stage approach.

1. Educational — participants are helped to perceive that learning to control arousal is a skill;
2. Acquisition — needed coping skills are learned: deep muscle relaxation; thought-stopping and replacement with positive self-statements; imagery work.
3. Practice — skills are progressively integrated into actual performance.[20]

Although this PST program was developed for use by athletes, it is representative of efforts which individuals could make to control and limit excessive arousal in physical activity.

For some individuals, arousal seeking may be important to survival

The other aspect of the optimal arousal concern is the utilization of physical activity as a mode of increasing and/or seeking arousal or stimulation. Human beings do not operate solely on a drive-reduction basis. Research over the past fifty years has indicated that human beings spend a great deal of time in activities unrelated to the reduction of primary drives and it appears that many need increases in stimulation in their environment. Evidence suggests that an individual's preference for a specific environment is closely related to his preferred level of stimulation.

How?

As the immediate environment becomes familiar, more complex stimulus events are necessary to maintain optimal arousal. The stimulus events which maintain information flow and enhance perceptions of complexity are called pacers. Small discrepancies between the expectations of the individual and pacers in the environment arouse positive affect and approach (interest) tendencies. Too much discrepancy causes negative affect and avoidance.

Individuals differ in their stimulation and pain tolerance

Individuals differ markedly in their need for stimulation and in pain tolerance. These seem to be two differing aspects of a complex psychological cluster which has been described as perceptual style. There seem to be two large categories of individuals:

- reducers — subjectively decrease the intensity of own sensory input;
- augmenters — subjectively increase the intensity of own sensory input.

Research evidence on these qualities yields the following information.

- there is a negative correlation between reducing and tolerance for stimulus deprivation;
- reducers prefer fewer hours of sleep;
- reducers are more likely to be contact athletes;
- augmenters are less accident prone;
- augmenters are more concerned with own health and safety.

Theorizing on the effect of the perceptual style variable on sport participation led Loy and Donnelly[21] (whose work is extensively utilized here) to conclude that several factors

affect sport context variation in stimulation. Among them were the following:

- vertigo/no vertigo;
- great skill/little skill;
- fast pace/slow pace;
- high risk/low risk;
- tiring/not tiring;
- high level competition/low level competition;
- complex strategy/simple strategy;
- audience/no audience;

To summarize, there is a need in our society for individuals to have access to activities and environments that enable them to maintain an optimal arousal level in their lives. Perceptual style is but one of many variables discussed in this monograph in which people differ markedly. It is important that a maximum number of activities and sporting contexts be available to all so that each may choose an environment and activity which best suits her or him and thus in which each is most likely to consistently participate.

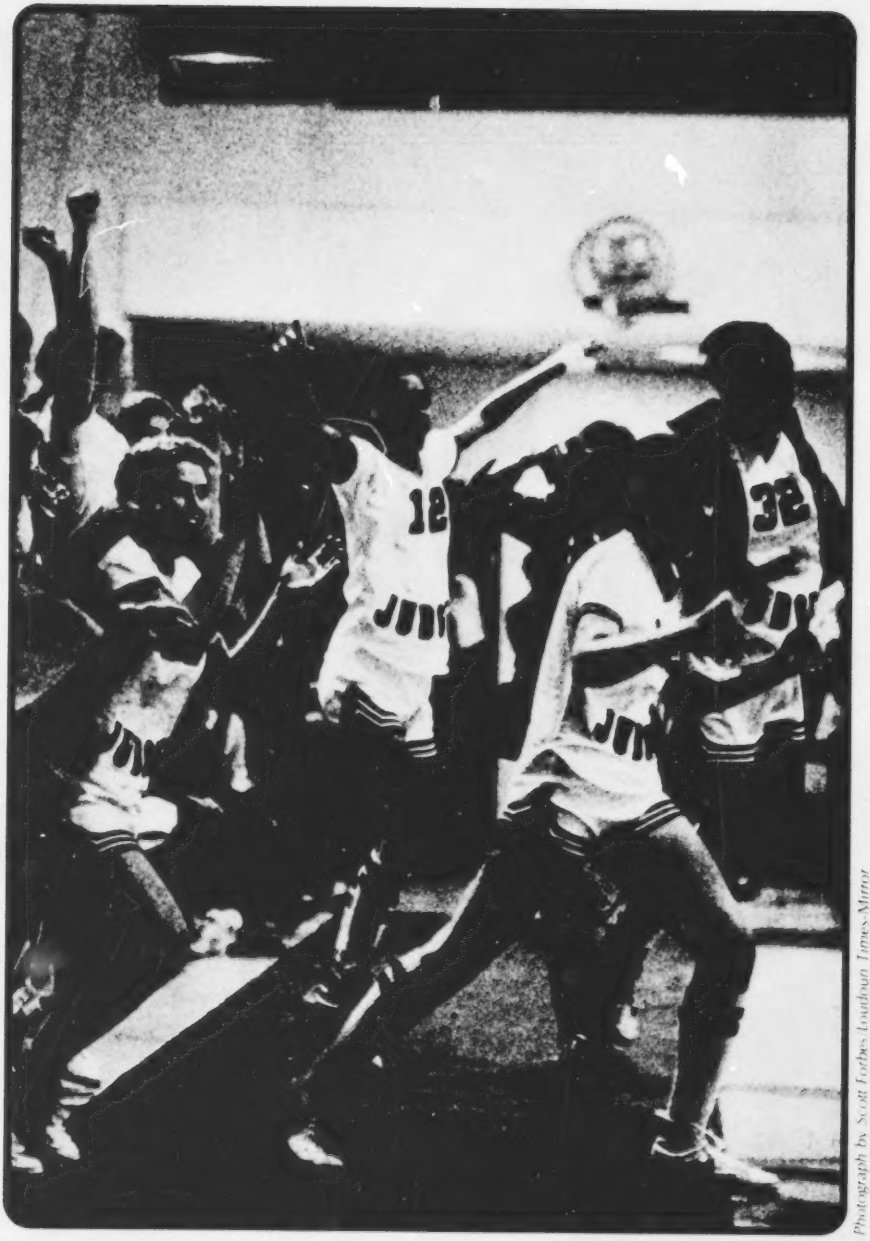
What Else?

Developing self-control of performance is important to survival

Another factor which seems logically linked to enhancing consistent and continuing participation in physical activity (and thus "surviving") is the improvement in the activity under the self-control of the performer. If a performer is dependent on a teacher, coach, or friend in order to participate, the times for participation are systematically linked to matching schedules. This is a structural problem which can be overcome through development of self-control of physical activity. There are other psychological benefits to self-control as well. Martens emphasizes in the Psychological Skills Training program that athletes need to exert greater control over their (competitive) life situation which, in turn, fosters independence and increasing personal freedom.

How?

In a recent symposium Lord and Kozar[22] gave some valuable insights concerning how to develop self-control and regulation of performance. They describe self-control as the internal rather than external determination of behavior in



Photograph by Scott Forbes Loudoun Times-Mirror

Stereotypes about what a "person like you" can and cannot do are arbitrary limitations which do not have to be accepted.

which one will engage. Self-control consists of self-observation and self-regulation. Thus the individual must detect cues and consequences surrounding a behavior and then manage the cues and consequences.

Through *systematic* self-observation (by video-tape, audio-tape, tally sheets, etc.), the performer discriminates the selected behavior from others and records own performance of the desired behavior and analyzes and evaluates the results. Through *systematic* self-rewards and punishments, contingent upon performance of desired behavior, the self-regulation is accomplished.

With techniques like these, true life-long learning (improved performance) can take place, relatively independent of specific friends or teachers or partners. Again the probability of consistent adherence to a regimen of participation is enhanced.

What Else?

Sport and other physical activity should always be encountered authentically, without stereotypes. Stereotypes about what "a person like you" can and cannot do are arbitrary limitations which do not have to be accepted. Choose an activity that suits your body build and size and temperament without regard to stereotypes. We need to lay to rest ideas like the following:

Women can't ...
  power lift,
  run marathons
  climb mountains;
Men can't ...
  dance,
  be graceful and supple,
  ever be unskilled;
Black performers can't ...
  do anything but basketball and sprint.

Who says?

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